



Christian Order

Summary of Contents for April 1978

PORTRAIT OF THE NEW RELIGION

Philip Trower

LOCKING THE YOUNG

The Editor

WESTERTON AND THE CHURCH : 2

Robert Knille

THE CHURCH IN A SICK WORLD

Father Basil Wrighton

SOME ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING

J. M. Jackson

THE WAY AHEAD : 2

The Editor

US CAN CHANGE

Joanna Nash

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Cum Permissu Superiorum

Contents

Page

- 4 KNOCKING THE YOUNG The Editor
- 6 PORTRAIT OF THE NEW RELIGION Philip Trower
- 8 DISSEMBLERS NOT NEW Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer
- 8 CHESTERTON AND THE CHURCH : 2 Robert Knille
- 10 SICK CHURCH IN A SICK WORLD Father Basil Wrighton
- 12 THE WAY AHEAD : 2 The Editor
- 12 FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH : 3 Dr. Rudolf Graber
- 12 SOME ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING J. M. Jackson
- 1 ANY QUESTIONS William Lawson, S.J.
- 1 BOOK REVIEW Joanna Nash

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Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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Knocking the Young

THE EDITOR

PRECISELY because it is unthinking contemporary criticism of the young goes only surface deep. It sees in their non-conformity no more than a surface irritant. The critics should look deeper. Were they to do so they would discover that the young, not only in this country but elsewhere in the world, are questioning the society which their elders for so long have taken for granted; and are in many cases in mental revolt against its mode and manner of expression in the economic and social fields. I think the young are right to be so. I sympathise with them in their disgust at the purposeless materialism of western capitalism's contemporary consumer society and the oppression brought by its casual ruthlessness to the poor. Insult is added to injury by the depersonalization and ensuing alienation inflicted on almost all by its present neo-corporative and massively growing monopolistic structure and its state-run social services. Small wonder that, in the West today, it becomes more and more difficult for a man to call his soul his own. He is fast becoming little more than a unit in a neo-corporative State, frustrated, in consequence, because of the outrage inflicted on his dignity by the increasingly secularized society in which he is forced to live.

The young sense this as the middle-aged do not, and it angers them. What angers them further is the inability of

their elders to comprehend their anger — to the point of offering them — by way of palliative for what they rightly regard, however dimly, as the loss of their souls—a future dashed high with material goods. What the young seek is the bright shining of a June morning. What they are presented with and told to be satisfied with is the bustle of a bargain basement. This they reject. They are right to do so. Under the circumstances, I am not surprised that they should proceed to query the difference between the kind of society they have been born into in the West and that offered the wretched citizens of the Soviet Union by the fatty old septuagenarian defenders of its Bolshevik Faith. This aborted Bolshevik society the young in the West rightly despise as the ultimate in mindless reaction. Yet, when they make comparison, which is valid enough, between the outworn materialism of Western Capitalism and its oppressive counterpart in contemporary Communist States; when they find points of similarity between the two systems and discard both, they are classified as Communists by their unthinking, materialistically-minded elders in the West. These are unable to comprehend that the real and rightful longing of the young is not for further dollops of bread, but for the Bread of Life, however dimly perceived as such; in other words, for the Supernatural which alone can bring to their lives the depth and significance for which they long. This I am sure, is what the young want more than anything else. Yet, this is what contemporary western society — because hidebound in its materialism — is incapable of giving them.

The impasse is there. It can be broken, not by the reactionary secular humanism of the World Council of Churches, but only by a Church that stands bravely against the secular permissiveness and economic materialism of contemporary western society at no matter what cost to itself, whilst offering the young with love and understanding the one thing they really want, which is Christ their Brother as the lodestar of their lives. The real meaning of renewal is here and nowhere else. We need desperately to recognise this before it is too late. A beginning might be made by listening, just for a change, to what the young have to say. How many priests, I wonder, are capable of that?

Philip Trower, a convert to the Catholic Church, was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford, where he read history, receiving his degree in 1942. He has written numerous articles (including a study of Karl Marx) for the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Spectator*.

The following article is warmly commended to readers. It merits thoughtful study. Acknowledgment and thanks to the Author and the *Wanderer* (USA), where it appeared in the first place.

Portrait of the New Religion

PHILIP TROWER

IN this article I am sketching the outlines of the new religion which bishops, priests, and lay people all over the world are pretending is the Catholic Faith as supposedly renewed by the Council.

What we are looking at is more than a mixture of bits and pieces taken from contemporary ideologies; progress religion, science worship, evolutionism, sex psychology, existentialism, salvation by politics and revolution, or moral and intellectual relativism. Neomodernism is all that, but something more. It therefore seems worthwhile to join the fragments together so that the significance of the whole can be better seen.

One should perhaps recognize too that modernism is now a powerful new "denomination", a fourth force on the religious scene, distinct obviously from Catholicism, but equally from Orthodoxy and Protestantism, which also harbor many modernist members. For the present, modernism still lives a parasitic life within the older parent bodies: there is as yet no identifiable modernist "church". But this situation will certainly not last. Much that goes on, under the name of ecumenism is the coming together

not of Christians to discuss their disagreements but of modernists who already share the same beliefs, and who are not in fact Christians in any real sense. Modernism is a devastating acid which dissolves belief in the supernatural religion revealed by God through Our Lord, leaving behind a worldview based on human opinions with a faint but meaningless "Christian" coloring.

1 Life Force

In the new religion the first principle is not that God should be glorified and His will done but that man's convenience should be attended to. The relationship of creature to Creator has been reversed. Man, at least implicitly, comes first. God second. God, if He is still believed in, is a weak indulgent father, who is the slave of his own children. He underwrites everything that man does. There is great emphasis on His love, care and concern for man; one cannot say on His mercy or justice, because God has no right to take offence at anything man does. He has a duty to look after man, usually without even receiving thanks. Only man has rights.

In those versions of the religion which are sliding closer and closer to atheism, God not only plays an ever diminishing role, He is less and less recognizable as God. From a living Being, He is reduced to a life force. In some versions, He is not a Being who already exists, but a being who is coming into existence.

Although in all these versions He scarcely counts at all, from time to time He is found fault with for not having arranged things better. God is to blame. Man is naturally nice, good, and always in the right. Of course he makes mistakes. But who can blame him, seeing the difficulties he has to contend with. If he does wrong, external circumstances are to blame. Not only is the relationship of the Creator to creature reversed. Sin is turned topsy-turvy. Guilt, if there is any, is on God's side; righteousness on man's.

In the beginning this weak God set the universe going and then more or less abandoned it in an embryonic state to complete itself through the working of accident limited by the law of "statistical necessity" — in other words by natural selection. Eventually the universe produced, by

natural selection, not Adam and Eve, but a generation of semi-humans whose descendants were step by step transformed into real men. Or were they yet real men? Are we? Evolution still goes on. You may think that the perfect man, Christ, has already come. But you are mistaken. The perfect men will only arrive at the end of history when evolution is complete.

Evolution, which embraces everything that takes place in history, good and bad, is the expression of God's plan for the universe — if He can be regarded as having one. No distinction is made between His active and permissive will. He looks with equal coolness on evil and ugliness, goodness and beauty. Evil in any case is a necessary part of evolution. Statistics make it unavoidable. God is the prisoner of statistics.

Although the new clerics are, in the fields that interest them, strict moralists, with their own notions of good and evil, they are philosophically committed to the principle that "everything that is, is right"—including racial prejudice, unjust political structures, legalism, authoritarianism, the whole bag of tricks.

A Secular Paradise

Having arrived on the scene, man found he had a task to perform. He had to transform the world: not to sanctify himself by the service of God and neighbor so as to be fit for a life of eternal happiness in Heaven, but to build a secular paradise. In doing this he was cooperating with evolution. Sin, when it exists, is failure to cooperate with evolution. Sin is evil not so much because it is an offence against God as because it damages man. It lets the side down—the human race. The evolutionary steeple-chase to the terrestrial paradise is slowed up.

There was no original rebellion of the human race against God in the person of its head. For those who do still recognize sin as an offence against God, original sin was the collective sinfulness of early men and women as they evolved from the semi-human state; it is also the "sinful situation" into which each new child is born.

In this system there is no need for a second head of the human race, a Redeemer who by obedience repairs the

amage done by the first head and wins for us the restoration of the supernatural life of sanctifying grace. Jesus Christ is a man; full stop. He died, was buried, and did not rise again from the dead. He was either the perfect example of what man should be—a man in whom God dwelt in a unique way; a prophet like Buddha or Mohamed; a revolutionary; or a dim historical figure whose real personality can barely be made out through the coating of fiction plastered over it by the Evangelists.

The Church came into existence through mass self-deception on the part of the Apostles and disciples. This happened at Pentecost. They suddenly had a psychological "experience"; they became convinced that Christ was alive. This does not mean that he was really alive. They were deluded. But their delusion transformed them. Christ had "risen in their hearts". The impression made by this experience was so powerful that they persuaded others to share their delusion. Easter and Pentecost were not forty days apart, the events or imaginary events associated with them all took place on the same day.

The apostles could, of course, have visited the tomb to see if their experiences corresponded with the facts. Was Our Lord's body still there or not? But apparently they did not think of doing this, even though the tomb was only a few hundred yards away. Nor did their hearers.

What happened at Pentecost was, however, the work of the Holy Spirit, even though it resulted in the apostles spreading through the world and perpetuating down the ages a collection of falsehoods.

This 'imaginary Christ, the product of the apostles' imaginations, is referred to as "the Christ of faith", while the man who died and was buried is called "the Christ of history". Little is known about this man, although he probably did live. The "Christ of faith", the imaginary one, is the object of Christian belief and devotion. Christians worship a fictitious being. It follows that the Catholic doctrine of the Mass cannot possibly be true. A no-longer living Christ cannot possibly be present on the altar.

Although the Good News of the apostles was untrue, they spread their teaching in good faith and men were persuaded by it to lead better lives. The delusion was therefore beneficial, because it produced useful results. This degraded

view of religion owes some of its popularity to the philosopher William James. It was held by the first modernists, at the beginning of the century, who saw the Catholic Church as the moral educator of mankind, even though it was perpetuating a myth.

Mere Disguises

We here meet the second principle of the new religion. Religion is not based on objective facts about God known from His creation and by Revelation. It has its origins in man's religious needs. He makes it up to satisfy his spiritual cravings. As history proceeds man is always changing and so his religious needs change too. Since it is right that he should feel happy and at ease, he must discard from this religion whatever makes him feel spiritually uncomfortable and add to it what satisfies him. If he wants suddenly to indulge in a "baptism of the spirit", like the pentecostals, let him. If he wants to abandon prayer for protest movements, let him do that too. Man is the arbiter of religion.

Just as the apostles invented the myth of the Resurrection, the members of the early Church, referred to as a "faith community", invented the rest of Christian belief and practice to satisfy their religious needs. Except for a few moral precepts, these beliefs and practices did not come from Christ. The New Testament is largely the record of the evolving religious ideas of the faith community; very little of what it says is true or records historical facts. The Church leaders—the elders or presidents of the assembly—were not guardians of truths revealed by God. They merely interpreted and gave expression to beliefs and wishes of the Christian people. Only later, as the religious needs of the people developed, did they come to regard their leaders as bishops and priests.

This picture of the early Church is also true of the Church throughout its history. Like everything else, the Church is evolving. Having gone through various transformations in the past, we can expect others in the future. These ideas are the basis for Process Theology and Situation Ethics which are merely disguises for adapting faith and morals to suit the times.

God, if He exists, has revealed very little, either through the Church or Holy Scripture, that is certain and definite.

The Old Testament, like the New, is seen as a collection of tales designed to impart a few imprecise "religious" ideas. For many its message amounts to little more than the injunction: "Be nice to other people"

On the other hand, God is continually revealing new truths to us individually, through our inner feelings or the events of daily life. This is called "ongoing revelation". Here two things are confused: the public Revelation of religious truth given through the Church for all mankind, and the private inspirations which God gives to individuals so that each can see how to fulfill God's publicly expressed will in his particular circumstances, or the kind of illumination about the meaning of divine things which He may give in prayer. For Catholics, no inner inspiration, however apparently convincing, which conflicts with God's publicly expressed will, can possibly be from God. These inner inspirations or private ideas, usually called "insights", are given first place in the new religion as a source of religious knowledge and truth.

What happens when the members of the faith community have contradictory "insights"? They get together in a group discussion at which they share their experiences and interest them for each other. The result, it is hoped, will be a consensus. The "insights" with majority support will become the beliefs of the community. This is how theology and dogma are made. But if agreement cannot be reached, one need worry. Existentialism is at hand with a convenient maxim. "You do your thing, and I will do mine". The new religion alternately exalts the individual according to the end in view at a given moment. In matters of belief, individualism is encouraged; anyone may believe what he likes. But when convenient the community is polarized.

Spurious Sense of Unity

At this point the apostles of the new religion are in a difficulty. How do you make a community out of people who have very little in common? Common beliefs are the strongest bond in any religious society and there are very few beliefs left. The internal principle of unity has gone. This is why the clergy, in order to keep the flock together, depend more and more on launching them into activities.

But these in themselves cannot counteract the disintegrating effects of the new religion. A spurious sense of unity therefore generated by various forms of psychological manipulation. In group dynamics and sensitivity sessions physical contact helps to bring about what was once achieved by union of mind and heart. Perhaps this is also why, when priest and penitent meet in the new face-to-face confession or reconciliation room, they clasp hands and give a good friendly squeeze.

In the 1960s, after 2,000 years of existence, the faithful community went through another of its many transformations; this time an unprecedented one. The word mutation is borrowed from the science of genetics to make it sound more impressive and probable. Modern man came of age; he grew up, and Catholic man along with him. This produced a new relationship between man and God. Hitherto man had been a child (though you may think a pampered one).

It is part of the mythology of popular psychology that human beings can only reach adulthood if at some stage in adolescence they rebel against their parents. For man to reach an adult relationship with God something similar had to happen. Man needs for a time to turn his back on God, disbelieve in Him and break His commandments. It is part of growing up. Later, when man has made some mistake and has begun to miss God a bit, the two meet again and the quarrel is made up. Not that man has to apologize. He was only freeing himself from excessive parental control. From now on they meet as equals.

(The above is not a parody. It is seriously presented as an interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son in pamphlets of French origin sold with episcopal permission all over the world).

Some modernists hailed the Second Vatican Council as the expression of man's coming of age: his coming-of-age party, so to speak. A new era was beginning. An age of the Holy Ghost, perhaps?

In his childlike state, before coming of age, Catholic man had needed the Pope, the bishops and clergy to tell him what to believe and how to behave. Had he not, with his sure instinct for spiritual self-satisfaction and self-preservation, invented the ecclesiastical hierarchy just for that purpose?

use; to act as Father and Mother? But now that he was grown up, he would decide these things for himself. In the new age, God would be talking to the individual directly by telephone, as it were, instead of sending him messages by a round about way through letters to his "parents". This rejection of ecclesiastical authority is referred to as the "liberation of the Church".

The Liberation of Man"

Mankind in general having grown up, God wants man to run the world on his own; man from now on is personally in control of the world and the evolutionary process. The faithful should therefore no longer pray to God for their religious needs. God does not want to be consulted; he expects men to provide for themselves. He is like the father who has retired and watches with satisfaction while the son handles the family business in the father's place.

Unfortunately, the son has found that the family business is far from being in good shape. Although the past is the story of human progress and everything has been getting better and better, the son is shocked to find in what a disorderly way evolution has been allowed to proceed. The past is such a mess he can hardly bear to look at it. However, once he is on top of things, no doubt they will move ahead faster and more efficiently. First and foremost, the world is full of unjust social, economic, and political structures, and these will have to be changed before the world can be transformed. This is called the "liberation of man", and it is the duty of Catholics to join in this work. Indeed this is the essence of their vocation.

The faithful might well be puzzled as to which of these many citadels of evil they are meant to assail. The world is full of institutions of every size and kind. Which are the few apostles referring to? The United States Congress? The Chase-Manhattan Bank? The Russian, French, or Italian Communist parties? No one tells the faithful. Nor are they told whether these institutions are unjust in principle and must be abolished, or whether they are only malfunctioning badly and need reforming. Perhaps there is no need to instruct them. The radical left is always there to show them what to look at and what to look away from.

Unjust structures are not only the cause of all the sin in the world, they are at the same time the concrete embodiment of sin. But one of the characteristics of this sin is that the members of the new religion do not share in it. That is why the new structures which are going to replace the old ones will not embody injustice or sin; they are going to be built by men without sin. As I said earlier, men—those at any rate with the right point of view—are naturally nice and good. The new religion knows nothing about grace or what happens when it is absent.

Man Has No Soul

We have come back to man, who is, after all, the center of the new religion, which has three more things to tell us about him.

To begin with, man has no soul. "This is the discovery of the Biblical critics. The *Bible*, they say, does not recognize the existence of the soul, which was the invention of Greek philosophy. (Apparently the critics have not studied Egyptian mythology or any of the major world religions.) "Who", reportedly said Bishop Heralda Camara at the 1973 Synod, "have ever seen a disembodied spirit?" This is why references to the soul in vernacular versions of the liturgy or the Bible are omitted or mistranslated. Before going up to Holy Communion we no longer say, as Pope Paul's Latin does, "Only say the word and my soul shall be healed". We say, "I shall be healed". "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his life"—so runs the Jerusalem Bible—not "of his soul", which the Greek and Latin have.

A man might well argue that he was happy to gain the whole world at the price of his life, since everyone is going to die, but not if he was going to risk losing his soul in Hell. If the soul cannot exist apart from the body there is no life after death and therefore no judgment. Man is not going to have to sit for the great final examination; he will not even have continuous assessment.

Another attribute of man is that he is a genius. He is almost limitlessly creative; there is hardly anything he cannot do. And since men are equal, every man is a potential genius; only defective education and oppressive institutions prevent his talents from flowering. Unless

an develop all his powers to the extent of their capacity and give them full expression he remains stunted and incomplete. He must therefore be allowed to try everything and forbidden nothing.

This is where the new religion adopts from existentialism and psychiatric theory the principle that personality and human nature are not something fixed which a man or woman possesses from the moment of conception for all eternity. They fluctuate. He can have more or less of them. Certain conditions make him more or less of a human being, more or less of a person.

The first condition necessary for full humanity is the power to communicate, to talk and be able to make oneself understood. Embryos and infants are barely human, so are the senile and mad, who may wish at certain points not to be human at all and may consequently be put to death. Partly because of this, man is not fully human on his own; he must be part of a group. The community makes the individual, not vice versa. A hermit in a cave is a semi-man; there is no place in the new religion for the contemplative solitary.

Comfort and Prosperity

To be completely human, a man must also have a standard of living fit for a "fully human existence". The amount of comfort and prosperity required seems to be that enjoyed by the well-provided-for European or American theologian—with perhaps a bit more. People who live in cottages with stone floors, who drink water out of wells, walk to work and cook their food in iron pots are not only poor, they are, even when happy and contented, suffering from diminishment of their human nature. Was the Holy Family affected in this way? The new religion, unlike the Gospels, has nothing encouraging to say about poverty.

Among a man's faculties are his sexual powers. These too must be given full rein if he is to be fully human. All must be allowed, everything tried. This is why the Vatican has had to issue its *Declaration on Sexual Ethics*. Fidelity in marriage and chastity before it, produce an enfeebled person, and virginity a nonperson. The Saviour would fall within this last category.

Developing one's "human potentialities" is what one might call the spirituality of the new religion as opposed to its dogmatic and moral theology. It takes the place which in the true religion is filled by the search for spiritual perfection, and proceeds by exactly the opposite principle. The saints advanced to glory by bearing wrongs patiently, accepting gladly the frustration of their wishes, and rejoicing when they were looked down upon. The new religion abhors these ideas. Everything which humbles and limits man and helps to keep him small in his own esteem is to be deplored as an unqualified evil.

Perhaps this is why, when the new theologians meet to share "insights" and discuss strategy, although preoccupied with world poverty, they so often gather in expensive hotels.

Twisted Remnants

What I have just described is now the religion of countless "Catholic" bishops, priests and laymen all over the world. It finds expression, as *Wanderer* readers know, in hundreds of books, and nearly all catechetical and educational material is steeped in it. Not all, of course, who depart from Catholic orthodoxy embrace the new religion in its totality. Some stop short at various resting places along the way. But it is the pole of attraction to which most tend and many of the most influential have not yet reached.

If for a moment we ignore the twisted remnants of natural and supernatural truth scattered about in the collection of religious and philosophical debris—the truth, for example, that we are meant to care for each other and to be cooperative (provided it is for an honorable purpose)—and if we overlook the obvious tendency to identify the task of the Christian with the objectives of secular humanitarianism and Marxism: one sees that the new religion, like its secular counterparts, not only aspires to build an earthly paradise, but is involved in the worship of man and the deification of change.

It is also the gospel of riches, which, without facing the clergy are preaching, as they denounce the rich and run after the poor.

Blessed are the rich. They have a fully human existence. Blessed are the healthy. They are complete human beings.

Blessed are the impure. They have not had their instincts frustrated.

Blessed are you when men think highly of you and flatter you because you are one of them; then the Church has a good image.

Blessed are you when you are liberated, not only from injustice and oppression, but from every kind of subordination; when you can have your own way in everything, as the rich do.

Hate your enemies, your employers, your parents, the bank manager, the oppressing classes, or whoever it may be.

Speak insultingly of those who find fault with you; the cardinals in Rome who examine your theological books.

Think ill of those who have authority over you and restrict your freedom—the few faithful bishops who still fulfill their duties.

Cursed are poverty, chastity, obedience, humility.

Woe to you poor, you sick, you mentally defective, you neurotics who will never be mature enough to contract a valid marriage. You will have no reward. You will die before the earthly paradise is built.

So, demonstrating and protesting, the new "church" proceeds on its way; this strange, tragic community of loving, caring, concerned, infuriated fully human persons, advancing expectantly into the future with bandaged eyes.

What will happen to it in that future, when it finally detaches itself from the Catholic Church and launches out on its own, as it ultimately will, though probably taking with it most of the Church's material possessions and a great part of its membership? Where will it end?

Will it have a long existence and lingering death as the emasculated state religion of the Common Market or a Euro-American empire of the Atlantic Alliance? Or, as the westward rolling tides from the East come onwards, will it, with all its expectations shattered, be submerged weeping in the depths of some Gulag archipelago? Is it there that it is destined, through Catholic fellow prisoners, to find again the lost pearl, the hidden treasure—like St. Hippolytus meeting Pope St. Pontian in a Sardinian silver mine and being absolved of his heresies before both went to their martyrdom?

There is little that is new in the Church's present confused condition. We have had it all before, as the late Archbishop Dwyer indicates in the quotation he gives us at the outset of this article and his comment on it. Acknowledgements to *Twin Circle*.

Dissemblers not New

ARCHBISHOP ROBERT J. DWYER

“CONSIDER the image of that time when all the affairs of the subject are disposed at one strong man's nod and all those subjects prepared, albeit with sinking heart to pronounce sentence of exile or death upon themselves . . . *Hinc inde potestas terribilis*—hence a terrible power

“To this pitch indeed, that the priests dissemble the commands of the Divine Law, that men are old without wisdom, that a judge sits ignorant of the law, a prelate knowing nothing of authority nor his people of discipline, that a man freeborn shall spurn his liberty, and a whole nation its quiet and peace”.

Old Warning

No, the passage quoted is not fresh-minted by some contemporary critic lamenting the grievous pass to which we have come in this last third of the twentieth century. It is an echo, rather, from the dying twelfth century, from John of Salisbury, student of the great Peter Abelard.

The late Helen Waddell whose graceful learning and penetrating wit illuminated for us the whole spectrum of late classical and medieval prose and poetry, from the Fathers of the Desert to the Wandering Scholars, cited it in a lecture delivered just after the end of the Second World War, pointing ineluctably to the obvious analogies.

But whereas in 1947, riding on the wings of victory, there seemed to be much more hope for in the Brave New World which would surely grow out of the United Nations, the quarter century following has pretty well blasted those hopes and reduced them to rubble.

To this pitch indeed have we come, a far worse pitch than anything John of Salisbury envisaged in his darkest forebodings. For then, while tyranny certainly flourished and corruption suppurated, these were localized and sporadic, nothing like universal as now.

And then, for all the medieval scholar's intimations of mortality, the high noon of the thirteenth century was just breaking through the clouds.

Turncoats

"That the priests dissemble the commands of the Divine Law"

We have paid our respects before this to the *trahison des clerics*, the betrayal of the Church by priests and Catholic scholars commissioned to teach the faith and clarify the deposit.

It is surely one of the unkindest cuts of all that Mother Church should be forced to see so many of those who have been nurtured by her as most dear sons, who have received their training, scholastic and spiritual, through her unquestioning bounty, turn on her like wolves, snarling and slandering her, blackening her name, falling over backwards to attribute all virtue to those who despise her and all vice to those who hold fast to her teaching and traditions.

Secularism

The secularization of Catholic education is pre-eminently an instance of this betrayal. It is more conspicuous at the college and university levels, but in fact the evidence of this treason is to be found throughout the system.

When Catholic university presidents with dollar signs glinting in their eyes, disavow the basic Catholic commitment of their institutions, and make elaborate, however transparent, attempts to justify their actual perfidy by a species of intellectual gymnastics, as though truth itself were up for grabs and there were no such thing as objective reality in metaphysics or in theology, you know you are in the presence of Judas once again: "Is it I, Lord?"

Or when, far down in the primary and secondary grades of our schools, children are callously and deliberately deprived of any real knowledge of the Faith, or are given jejune moral platitudes in place of formal doctrinal instruc-

tion, all on the theory that the child mind is incapable of grasping abstractions (a purely gratuitous assumption), such as the Divinity of Our Lord or the teaching authority of the Church, the Gospel parable of the man reaching his child a stone instead of a load of bread comes home all too pointedly.

Novel Experience

Theologians as dissemblers: not a wholly novel experience in the Church's memory. Arius dissembled for a good while and might well have gotten away with it, with plausible arguments and dazzling subtleties, had not Athanasius smoked him out.

Luther was prudently cautious for a while in acknowledging that what he taught could by no stretch of interpretation be reconciled with Catholic doctrine.

Dissemblers

Voltaire played his little comedy with Pope Benedict XIV, while actually ridiculing and blaspheming the very fundamentals of the Christian Faith.

But it has been reserved to our own piping time to witness a veritable proliferation of those who loudly proclaim their adherence to Mother Church while playing fast and loose with her basic teachings.

A theologian who calls in question a dogma as clearly defined as the Virgin Birth, yet denounces those who wonder about his integrity as intransigents and stupid fundamentalists, is not unlikely a dissembler.

Or is there another term?

"Men are old without wisdom"

Philosophy is the summation of human wisdom. Its purpose, ideally, is to give man, here below, clear and positive answers to the basic questions of life, of reality, of truth, of moral behaviour.

Philosophies have varied, heaven knows, from solipsism to crass materialism, from Aristotle to John Dewey, and have accounted for much of the anguish of mankind, the tyrannies authorized, or the spiritual desolation engendered no less than the vision illumined and hope sustained.

But men have at least asserted their loyalties; they have tried to justify their ways.

But today philosophy is a laughing-stock. If it is taught at all it is by way of a humorous commentary on the vagaries of the mind.

Philosophy Necessary

A wag once remarked of William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* that it should be properly entitled *Strange Religions I Have Known*, and the same might be said of current attitudes towards philosophy.

Even, be it noted, in our Catholic schools and seminaries. But without philosophy old men are foolish and young men are hell-bent on making fools of themselves.

"That a judge sits ignorant of the law"

John of Salisbury could well have had a prophetic soul had he pierced through the ages and focussed attention of these United States four years ago, in 1973, the year of the law's supreme disgrace.

For the recklessness and appalling ignorance of the Burger Court in decisions affecting unalienable human rights, the Abortion case and the School case brought its intellectual and moral bankruptcy under the glare of the klieg lights.

Dangerous Waters

But here again it is a case (the metaphor being changed) of the tip of the iceberg showing, while the vast unseen bulk menaces the surrounding seas.

When we are taught, in the paternal and patronizing drawl of the Old Master, Oliver Wendell Holmes, that the law is what the public will stand for at any given time, then what use has the judge for learning, what need has he for verifying references?

"A prelate knows nothing of authority nor his people of discipline"

Doubtless the prudent thing, manifestly the more ingratiating, would be to pass over this item of John of Salisbury's indictment in silence. The suspicion nags, however, that if this be done the very stones will cry out.

Expediency

It is only too painfully evident that there are those, entrusted with the care of Churches around the world, who

have compromised their ecclesiastical and spiritual authority in favor of some illusory advantage of popularity, of being hail-fellows-well-met, of being in tune with the times.

The Vatican Council wanted nothing so much as a genuine spirit of fraternity and concord between the bishop and his priests, between the bishop and his flock, but it never gave a passing thought to the practical abdication of episcopal authority which we are witnessing here and there over the Catholic world, always advertized as illustrating the spirit of the Council.

If discipline is declining among the laity, if it is well-nigh moribund in some quarters, it is not the fault of the rank and file, but the quality of the leadership given them.

Mercy and Faith

It is a theme for any bishop's meditation, any pastor's, most pointedly for the writer of these lines, who is only too well aware of his personal inadequacies.

"That a free man shall spurn his liberty, and a whole nation its quiet and peace"

Comment would not only be superfluous in view of the American scene, it would insult the intelligence of any reader. It was Alcuin, Charlemagne's clerk, who wrote, more than 1200 years ago, "the world is full of many griefs, and there is no comfort but in this, the mercy of God and the faith of our friends".

In truth that says all that can be said.

CASSETTE CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

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In this concluding half of his article, Robert Knille continues his illustration of the relevance of Chesterton's writings to the problems of the contemporary Church.

Chesterton and the Church : 2

ROBERT KNILLE

SINCE the historic definitions made by the Church affected the core of human sensibility and human living, such statements were, in fact, of more lasting importance than civil treaties.

Nobody will ever write a history of Europe that will make any sort of sense until he does justice to the Councils of the Church, those vast and yet subtle collaborations for thrashing out a thousand thoughts to find the true thought of the Church. 'The great religious Councils are far more practical and important than the great international treaties, which are generally made the pivotal dates of history. Our every-day affairs at this moment are far more affected by Nicaea and Ephesus and Basle and Trent than they were by Utrecht or Amiens or Vienna or Versailles. For in almost every case, the international peace was founded on a compromise; the religious peace was founded on a distinction. It was not a compromise to say that Jesus Christ was Perfect God and Perfect Man; as it was a compromise to say that Danzig should be partly Polish and partly German. It was the enunciation of a principle, of which the very completeness distinguishes it from the Monophysite on the one side and the Arian on the other. And it has affected, and does still affect the general state of mind of thousands of Europeans, from admirals to apple-women, who do think (even vaguely) of Christ as something human and divine. To ask the apple-woman what are the present practical results for her of the Treaty of

Utrecht would be less than fruitful. (*The Resurrection of Rome.*)

Chesterton continues this chapter in his book on Rome with another statement of the historical and social effects which ultimately derive from the distinctions of theological principles.

Now our civilization is simply made up of these old moral decisions; which many think minute decisions. On the day which ended certain metaphysical disruptions about Fate and Freedom, it was decided whether Austria should look like Arabia; or whether travelling in Spain should be the same as travelling in Morocco. When the dogmatists drew a fine distinction between the sort of honour due to marriage and the sort of honour due to virginity, they stamped the culture of a whole continent with a definite pattern of red and white; a pattern which some people may not like; but which all people recognize when they revile. When men distinguished between lawful lending and usury, they created an actual historical human conscience, which even the enormous modern triumph of usury, in the materialistic age, has not yet wholly destroyed. When St. Thomas Aquinas defined true property, and also defined the abuses of false property, the tradition of that truth made a real recognizable breed of men, to be recognized today in the mob politics of Melbourne or Chicago; almost always differing from the Communists in admitting property; yet almost always in practice in protest against plutocracy. In short, these thin distinctions grew up into very thick and thorough-going principles and even prejudices.

Condemnation of Falsehood and Larger Liberties

A further aspect of the rationale for denouncing false beliefs is that most of these beliefs would, after the fads subsided, have been discarded in the name of common sense anyway, and most of the condemnations actually resulted in the protection of larger liberties.

Now of nearly all the dead heresies it may be said that they are not only dead, but damned; that is, they are condemned or would be condemned by common sense, even outside the Church, when once the mood and mania

of them is passed. Nobody now wants to revive the Divine Rights of Kings which the first Anglicans advanced against the Pope. Nobody now wants to revive the Calvinism which the first Puritans advanced against the King. Nobody now is sorry that the Iconoclasts were prevented from smashing all the statutes of Italy. Nobody now is sorry that the Jansenists failed to destroy all the dramas of France. Nobody who knows anything about the Albigenians regrets that they did not convert the world to pessimism and perversion. Nobody who really understands the logic of the Lollards (a much more sympathetic set of people) really wishes that they had succeeded in taking away all political rights and privileges from everybody who was not in a state of grace. "Dominion founded on Grace" was a devout ideal; but considered as a plan for disregarding an Irish policeman controlling the traffic in Piccadilly, until we have discovered whether he has confessed recently to his Irish priest, it is wanting in actuality. In nine cases out of ten the Church simply stood for sanity and social balance against heretics who were sometimes very like lunatics . . . A study of the true historical cases commonly shows us the spirit of the age going wrong, and the Catholics at least relatively going right. It is a mind surviving a hundred moods.

. . . But these historical proofs would be nothing without the human and personal proofs, which would need quite a different sort of description. It is enough to say that those who know the Catholic practice find it not only right, but always right when everything else is wrong; making the Confessional the very throne of candour where the world outside talks nonsense about it as a sort of conspiracy; upholding humility when everybody is praising pride; charged with sentimental charity when the world is talking a brutal utilitarianism; charged with dogmatic harshness when the world is loud and loose with vulgar sentimentalism—as it is today. (*The Thing*.)

Clear-cut Reasons versus Emotional Reactions

Chesterton used a consideration of cannibalism as an instance of the modern retreat from thought and from

Christian rationality, arguing that many people now have no clear-cut *reasons* for opposing cannibalism, but only an emotional reaction against it.

The world, especially the modern world, has reached a curious condition of ritual or routine; in which we might almost say that it is wrong even when it is right. It continues to a great extent to do the sensible things. It is rapidly ceasing to have any of the sensible reasons for doing them. It is always lecturing us on the deadness of tradition; and it is living entirely on the life of tradition. It is always denouncing us for superstition; and its own principal virtues are now almost entirely superstitions. I mean that when we are right, we are right by principle; and when they are right, they are right by prejudice. We can say, if they prefer it so, that they are right by instinct. But anyhow, they are still restrained by healthy prejudice from many things into which they might be hurried by their own unhealthy logic. It is easiest to take very simple and even extreme examples; and some of the extremes are nearer to us than some may fancy.

Thus most of our friends and acquaintances continue to entertain a healthy prejudice against Cannibalism. The time when this next step in ethical evolution will be taken seems as yet far distant. But the notion that there is not very much difference between the bodies of men and animals—that is not by any means far distant, but exceedingly near. It is expressed in a hundred ways, as a sort of cosmic communism. We might almost say it is expressed in every other way except cannibalism.

... Some are fussy about what happens to the bodies of animals, as if they were quite certain that a rabbit resented being cooked, or that an oyster demanded to be cremated. Some are ostentatiously indifferent to what happens to the bodies of men; and deny all dignity to the dead and all affectionate gesture to the living. But all these have obviously one thing in common; and that is that they regard the human and bestial body as common things. They think of them under a common generalization; or under conditions at best comparative. Among people who have reached this position, the *reason* for disapproving of cannibalism has already become very

vague. It remains as a tradition and an instinct. Fortunately, thank God, though it is now very vague, it is still very strong. But though the number of earnest ethical pioneers who are likely to begin to eat boiled missionary is very small, the number of those among them who would explain their own real reason for not doing so is still smaller.

The real reason is that all such social sanities are now the traditions of old Catholic dogmas. Like many other Catholic dogmas, they are felt in some vague way even by heathens, so long as they are healthy heathens. But when it is a question of their not being merely felt but formulated, it will be found to be a formula of the Faith. (*The Thing.*)

In *The Resurrection of Rome*, GKC recapitulates his unshakeable belief in the supreme value of clear theological distinctions.

If such a theological distinction is a thread, all Western history has hung on that thread; if it is a fine point, all our past has been balanced on that point. The subtle distinctions have made the simple Christians; all the men who think drink right and drunkenness wrong; all the men who think it wrong to hit first and right to hit back; and . . . all the men who think it right to carve statues and wrong to worship them. These are all, when one comes to think of it, very subtle theological distinctions.

The Necessity of Institutions

One of the themes that the Hartford group branded as false was that "Institutions and historical traditions are oppressive . . .; liberation from them is required for authentic existence and authentic religion". Chesterton regarded institutions, on the contrary, not only as necessary to ensure the continuity of doctrine and indeed of all social life, but also as being liberating in themselves.

It is the fashion to talk of institutions as cold and cramping things. The truth is that when people are in exceptionally high spirits, really wild with freedom and invention, they always must, and they always do, create institutions. When men are weary they fall into anarchy; but while they are gay and vigorous they invariably make

rules. This, which is true of all the churches and republics of history, is also true of the most trivial parlour game or the most unsophisticated meadow romp. We are never free until some institution frees us, and liberty cannot exist till it is declared by authority. (*Manalive*.)

The Central Event of Christian Belief

The central event of Christian belief that Chesterton depicts so strikingly in *The Everlasting Man* is unique, so amazing that only absolute and definitive statements could ever have kept it alive.

Right in the middle of all these things [pre-Christian theories about God] stands up an enormous exception. It is quite unlike anything else. It is a thing final like the trump of doom, though it is also a piece of good news; or news that seems too good to be true. It is nothing less than the loud assertion that this mysterious maker of the world has visited his world in person. It declares that really and even recently, or right in the middle of historic times, there did walk into the world this original invisible being; about whom the thinkers make theories and the mythologists hand down myths; the Man Who Made the World. That such a higher personality exists behind all things had indeed always been implied by all the best thinkers, as well as by all the most beautiful legends. But nothing of this sort had ever been implied in any of them. It is simply false to say that the other sages and heroes had claimed to be that mysterious master and maker, of whom the world had dreamed and disputed. Not one of them had ever claimed to be anything of the sort. Not one of their sects or schools had ever claimed that they had claimed to be anything of the sort. The most that any religious prophet had said was that he was the true servant of such a being. The most that any visionary had ever said was that men might catch glimpses of the glory of that spiritual being; or much more often of lesser spiritual beings. The most that any primitive myth had ever suggested was that the Creator was present at the Creation. But that the Creator was present at scenes a little subsequent to the supper-parties of Horace, and talked with tax-collectors and

government officials in the detailed daily life of the Roman Empire, and that this fact continued to be firmly asserted by the whole of that great civilization for more than a thousand years—that is something utterly unlike anything else in nature.

The Great Divine - Human Romance

Finally, GKC saw the basic core of Christian belief not as conventional nor pedestrian but as the great divine-human romance, in a passage again reflecting the dynamic balance that the Church has displayed throughout the ages.

This is the thrilling romance of Orthodoxy. People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It was sanity; and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad. It was the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic. The Church in its early days went fierce and fast with any war-horse; yet it is utterly unhistoric to say that she merely went mad along one idea, like a vulgar fanaticism. She swerved to left and right, so exactly as to avoid enormous obstacles. She left on one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an oriental-ism, which would have made it too unworldly. The orthodox Church never took the tame course or accepted the conventions; the orthodox Church was never respectable. It would have been easier to have accepted the earthly power of the Arians. It would have been easy, in the Calvinistic seventeenth century, to fall into the bottomless pit of predestination . . . To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect. (*Orthodoxy*).

In this talk, given to the Oxford Branch of the Latin Mass Society last year, Father Basil Wrighton pin-points the nature of the Church's post-conciliar failure. In a world sick as never before, it has not played the physician's part, but taken the world's sickness to itself.

Sick Church in a Sick World

FATHER BASIL WRIGHTON

NEVER was the Catholic Church more desperately needed than it is today, when the post-Christian civilization of the West has cut itself off from its roots and run amuck, as a prelude to its own suicide. First of all, it threw overboard its faith in a divine Being, a divine revelation, a divine providence and eternal life. After that went the moral law, which was the real foundation of its prosperity, but which could not long survive without a divine sanction. Then the sanity and order inherited from its Greek and Roman origins were tossed on to the scrap-heap, and nothing remained but a consummate technology which could be used indifferently for good or evil, but was much more likely (human nature being what it is) to be used for evil ends.

Church and World in Last Quarter of this Century

So here we are, in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Our western technology has overspread the earth; but wherever it goes, it brings a uniform ugliness and pollution, so that there is no longer much incentive to go out and see the world: the scene is becoming much the same everywhere. We can travel indeed faster than sound, but are quite likely to be either strike-bound at the airport or hijacked on the way and held captive in the machine under threat of murder. We can do marvels with electricity and

atomic energy; but at what a fearful risk of world-wide catastrophe when control falls into criminal hands, as it is sure to do, sooner rather than later! The power of broadcasting speech and motion pictures might have seemed promising: but its most conspicuous result has been to spread the corruption of violence and pornography into the bosom of every family, rendering human society even more depraved than it was before. The great mass of people, ever more dependent on machines and mechanical processes, and increasingly drugged with mechanical amusements, falls an easy prey to the socialist, communist or fascist regimes which compete for control of the machinery of power.

Who or what is to rescue men from the spiritual slavery that is creeping over them? The most plausible answer, up till about 1965, would have been the Catholic Church; the one world-wide institution endowed with divine authority for this very purpose of saving men's souls. Its conspicuous unity and universality, its stamp of superhuman holiness and unchanging apostolic tradition, marked it out for the task it had always made its own: the task of healing man's corruption, correcting his bias towards evil, and raising up his mind and heart from worldly vanities to the good things that endure for ever.

But in the wake of the Second Vatican Council a sudden change has come over the Church. It no longer presents the same picture. Its unity of faith, worship and discipline has broken down, its holiness is dimmed, and its venerable traditions are being discarded with all possible speed. At the very moment when its helping hand is most needed by a world in crisis, it has decided to plunge *itself* into crisis—share the world's lunacy, disorder and debauchery. At least, that is what it looks like. If this is not the result of the Council, it has been done in the name of the Council and has become, for the time being, the accepted policy.

So, in place of the one Holy Mass of all the ages (which is now practically, though not legally, suppressed) we have, besides thousands of vernaculars, more than twenty different Canons of the New Rite and an infinite variety of crude liturgical experiments, tending to differ in each parish. In place of the uniform Catholic doctrine on faith and morals

once taught in all our schools and seminaries, we have a vague pluralism of modernist theologies and ethics, hardly distinguishable from those of the Liberal Protestants, and equally powerless to stem the tide of unbelief and corruption. Even the Ten Commandments have come under attack, Number Six especially being pruned down lavishly to suit the *mores* of the permissive society we live in.

The place of traditional Catholicism is now being taken by a watered-down, epicene syncretism which, under the label of "oecumenism", is prepared to jettison everything specifically Catholic for the sake of an external semblance of unity with all other Christians or semi-Christians—a unity of unbelief rather than of Christian faith. The degree of this symbiosis varies much from one country to another, Holland and France being in the vanguard; but we all seem to be drifting in the same direction.

Cause of the Present Mess

Such is the present picture : an incoherent shambles of a church instead of the great and glorious temple of yesterday. In the anguish of our deprivation we may be tempted to judge that the Second Vatican Council was the source of this disaster. It was of course the *occasion* of it, but the *source* lies much deeper: its roots are in the infernal regions. The Council, with its unguarded enthusiasm for updating (*aggiornamento*) and its lack of any obvious and urgent job for the assembled Fathers, simply provided an opening for disruptive forces which already existed below the surface. The small but resolute modernist faction, mainly from north-western Europe, with its attendant troop of "experts", was allowed to steal the show from the first session onwards, and after the Council to take full control of its application in practice. The Council's official decrees were of course divinely preserved from heresy, but they were often ambiguous; and the post-conciliar commissions made use of the ambiguities, firstly to destroy the Catholic liturgy and then to demolish any other barriers and safeguards which the centuries of counter-reformation had set up for the protection of Catholic tradition in faith and morals. And all this in the name of Vatican the Second and holy obedience !

There is the cause of the present mess; and the modernist party is still in control, pushing us relentlessly forward along the road of Protestantism, humanism and revolution, towards the ultimate goal of atheism and Antichrist.

Meanwhile the world of politics continues its own rake's progress into socialism and communism, bluffing the people with such degrading sops as cheap and easy divorce, contraceptives on the National Health, and abortion on demand, to cover up the Welfare State's growing encroachments on their liberty. The people have forgotten that they have souls to save and a Day of Judgment to face; and the liberal churchmen no longer remind them of such things, they harp only on human rights and liberation—when they are not flirting behind the Curtain with Marx or Mao. They talk incessantly of justice and peace; but men just go on quarrelling and fighting, and the newest weapons of ultimate and total genocide go on piling up and spreading over the earth, while God's rights are ignored. The end of all things seems to be approaching, and who can call a halt?

Nobody, at present. Nothing can save mankind from this crisis but a religion centred on God and the supernatural and working by the supernatural means which God gave to His Church: the Gospel, the Holy Mass and the Sacraments. We cannot be saved by a merely natural religion centred on man and his worldly interests, like that of the modernists.

The Mass is the Key

The key to this situation is of course the Holy Mass, the Sacrifice by which our Lord redeemed us. The Mass, by its unity with Christ's Person and His Passion, was the very life of the Church, the centre of its supernatural power and holiness. That presumably is why the pseudo-reformers made it the first object of their attack, now as in the sixteenth century. They could not do away with it, but the form which they have now given it is but a pale shadow of its former self, an equivocal compromise with heresy. The doctrines of Sacrifice, Transsubstantiation and the Real Presence (as being unacceptable to Protestants) are played down and obscured, so that they are already fading into uncertainty in the minds of many of our own people,

especially of the younger generation who are no longer being taught their catechism. The emphasis has been transferred from that of a sacrifice at an altar to that of a community meal round a table in memory of a past event, and the priest and people are made to face one another like guests at a party rather than to face their God and Saviour and concentrate their minds on Him. The whole setting and atmosphere of the New Rite, confirmed by the wording of its official introduction, conveys an inadequate and misleading impression of what the Mass is. The eucharistic theology now being insinuated is more Protestant than Catholic, and marks of reverence and devotion have been so consistently suppressed (even to the point of putting the Blessed Sacrament into people's hands) that these very qualities will soon have passed away. At best we shall be left with the polite boredom of a reformed conventicle, at worst with the rock-and-roll antics of the so-called "folk Masses". What was a tremendous mystery has been given the shape and sound of something quite trivial.

The post-conciliar "reorientation" of liturgy and theology amounts to a fundamental rejection of the Counter-reformation, indeed to something like a disowning of the Council of Trent itself and the whole dogmatic tradition that it summarized. Can it be that we are witnessing that great Apostasy foretold by scripture* to precede the Second Coming? It could well be so. The time may be later than we think.

What We Must Do

What then are we to do about it? Simply what our Lord and His Apostles told us to do: *watch and pray*. We cannot go wrong as long as we hold fast to the old religion, the religion we were brought up in. The old Mass, as codified for all time by St. Pius V, is a most important part of that religion, and no one has the right to deprive us of it. The new Mass has indeed been authorized as an alternative rite, but it cannot be allowed to supersede the old. The new rite is in principle valid in itself, because the Holy See has made it so. But it can easily become

*2 Thess. 2:3—11; Lk. 18:8.

invalid in practice, because of the ambiguities built into it. It is therefore a source of danger to our Faith, and lends itself to endless abuses (we have already seen too many of these). It is an abnormal thing, alien to Catholic tradition, and one cannot imagine it becoming the permanent norm of Catholic worship—if the Catholic Church is to survive, as of course it must and will. So we must keep watch over our Faith, resist all innovations which endanger it, and pray constantly for a speedy restoration of normal, integral Catholicism—including, above all, the complete restoration of the traditional Mass.

We must also make every allowance for the good faith of our brethren who use the new rite without trouble to their consciences. We must not excommunicate them even in our own minds, even if they show a desire to excommunicate *us*. The Church is at present critically ill, and needs to be nursed back to health rather than castigated. The disciplinary measures will come later, when the true enemies have been exposed: Our daily prayer should be for *all* the members of the Church, and especially for those in authority, whether or not they seem to be using their authority rightly.

We do not know exactly why the Church has been afflicted in this terrible manner. It is part of the mystery of evil. There are many sad precedents in the Church's chequered history, but nothing on so great a scale or so deeply involving the centre of authority. It was truly remarked by Archbishop Lefebvre that "Satan's master-stroke is to have succeeded in sowing disobedience to all Tradition through obedience". What we *do* know—because it is always before our eyes—is the massive collapse of moral principle in our contemporary world, following its general abandonment of Christianity. And we know too that a great number of Catholics have been infected by the immorality which surrounds them. There has been a partial reversion to the kind of pagan hedonism which was the Church's first enemy and which now finds advocates among our renegade theologians. So the Church's present crisis can be seen as a judgment on the sins of its members. All the more need for our prayer and watchfulness.

In the second half of his speech at Caxton Hall on November 29th last year Father Crane shows the pre-conciliar Church as hampered in its work by modes, manners and attitudes that were a hindrance to the spreading of the Gospel long before Vatican II was ever called. Above all, it had long since fallen victim to Social Modernism, which paved the way for the Religious Modernism that now afflicts it.

Current Comment

THE WAY AHEAD: 2

THE EDITOR

I WANT to say something now that may surprise you a little. It is this. I would regard what I have said so far this evening as not merely incomplete, but gravely defective if, at this point, I wound up my speech and sat down. Let me explain why. It is because of my fear that, if I left things where they are now, I might leave you labouring under what I would consider to be a serious misapprehension. Before moving on to that, however, I would like to warn you, if I may, against an attitude of mind which can build up in us all—myself very much included—as we fight the battle against the progressive thrust within the contemporary Church. Let us take these two in order—first, the wrong attitude of mind that can develop and, then, secondly, the misapprehension under which, perhaps, some of you very understandably may be labouring.

The Foxhole Mentality

What I am thinking of as the wrong attitude of mind that can build up in us as we fight in defence of the Church is what I call the foxhole mentality. We can get so used to the fight, so taken up with it, that we not merely relish it but revel in it. In other words, the fight, not the Faith for which

we fight, becomes the thing we are fighting for. Right order is thus reversed. A mere means has become an end in itself. We can no longer see the wood for the trees. Or, as Marshal McLuhan has put it, the medium has become the message. We live not for the Faith, but for the struggle to preserve it; which means that we would be lost without the struggle, as some of the finest combat troops of the last war were lost when the war was over. For what, then, had they been fighting? For what, we can ask legitimately, have we been fighting, if we have reached the point where we cannot live or live adequately without the fight? At such a point, we are not all that far removed from certain teenage types who live for their Saturday evening dust-up with members of a rival gang. You may remember that poignant little incident in Graham Greene's *Burnt-Out Case*. It concerned a devoted missionary sister who had spent years in a leprosarium in what was then the Belgian Congo, administering medicine each day to her lepers who sat round her as she went round the circle giving each his daily dose. Then, a new drug came which cut out overnight the need for her ministrations; which made her redundant in a flash. Her reaction was not to thank God for the good fortune that had come in this fashion to her lepers. Instead, "What is to become of me"?, she asked. If this is to be our own reaction when the poison of neo-Modernism is drained from the Church and the victory won, we shall know that we have been fighting in vain. Our own personal contribution to the victory will have been smudged to zero.

Moreover—and here is a further point—our own contribution may well have been smudged to less than zero. By this I mean that it may have become negative; in this sense that, subconsciously almost, we shall have become negative; cantankerous, inflexible and, too often, unforgiving. Please do not get me wrong here. I am not calling for softness, for the kind of cowardice that masquerades too often under the cloak of prudence; not for that supposedly English "virtue" of compromise which affects to see both sides of every question, adopts, in consequence, some bogus "middle way" as an effective solution of the problem in front of it and ends in futility. I want none of that. The overriding need in the Church today is for those who will fight at no matter what cost to themselves until the victory

is won, giving all they have to bring this about. This much is certain, but the fighting must be by those whose hearts are pure; i.e. single-minded—for the Faith, in other words, and *not* with hate in their hearts against individual opponents; loathing and rejecting the errors these propagate, whilst loving them, which means seeking their good always. This is hard, but it is essential. Failure here polarises the whole conflict, turns it into a war of bitter fractions whose object in the end is to score points off each other and nothing more. This can only mean the postponement, maybe for years, of the day we strive for—one that will see the tide of neo-Modernism not merely checked, but swept back and, with this, the reconciliation in God's truth—it can be nowhere else—of those within the Church at present struggling against each other.

Do we Fight to Preserve All of What Was?

Let me turn to the misapprehension under which some of those at present struggling so valiantly to uphold the truth may yet be labouring. I can introduce what I have to say under this head by putting a question to you, if you will be good enough to allow me to do so. It would go like this: Are we fighting to preserve the set-up and attitudes within the Church exactly as they were before the Second Vatican Council? I will give you my own personal answer and I will give you the reasons for it. My personal answer straightway is that I am not. Notice, please, that I am not talking about the essential substances of the Church—dogmatically, morally and structurally—but of what might be described as the peripheral mores, manners and modes of handling and expressing the essentials. It is here, on reflection, that I notice much that seems to me to have been out of place and in need of reform long before Vatican II was ever convened by Pope John. What I am fighting for is that essential body of truth which always has been and always must be sustained within the Church and which is the Faith of my Fathers; also for those structures laid down in the last analysis, by Christ Himself as essential not only for the support of that Truth, but for its propagation. What I am not fighting for is the Church as structured peripherally to meet the needs of a *particular* age that is past and for doctrine *as presented* and modes and manners *as*

adopted with the same end in view. Here, I am for development—which I see as genuine when it comes as a flowering out of age-old tradition—that adapts the Church's peripheral structuring and manner of life and teaching to the times through which she lives without ever damaging, as she does so, that which belongs to her essential and unalterable self. What I will not have is what it appears to me we have had for the past fifteen years; viz. the heedless and insensitive imposition on the Faithful, at the hands of a progressive minority, of rootless change for its own sake. This I reject. I cannot see that any man in his senses would do anything else. It is this kind of rotless and ruthless imposition that has smashed the Church in Holland and that is smashing it now, so far as I can see, in France and in the United States. And it is precisely because the proponents of *A Time for Building* would seem, with whatever sincere but misguided intentions, to be in pursuit of the same goal that I reject this document absolutely. I would add that, if they persist in their demands for a National Pastoral Council as they appear to be doing and if the Bishops yield to their demands, as they may do, then we will know that we are not now witnessing the beginning of the end of the neo-modernist thrust against the Church in this country. What we will be witnessing will be no more than the end of that strong resistance to it in which many of you participated at no little cost to yourselves. In consequence, I would implore the Bishops, as I trust this meeting will implore the Bishops, not to yield to the demands of a failing and fading progressive minority for a National Pastoral Council. As I see it, such a Council will be made no more and no less than an occasion for promoting not the Faith of our Fathers, but that weird new conglomerate which is known as the post-conciliar Church. In evidence of what may come I suggest you examine the shambles into which the Dutch Progressives turned their National Pastoral Councils and the outrageous circus into which, at the end of October, 1976, in Detroit, the Americans turned theirs at enormous financial cost. We want none of this nonsense in this country and we will not have it. At the same time—and to come back to my point—we do not want to go back to certain attitudes and peripheral structurings in the pre-conciliar Church which were irrelevant and out of tune

even then and which would be more irrelevant than ever now. Let me list some of them in order that I may be as concrete as possible and let me begin, as is only right and proper, since I am one of them myself, with priests and religious in the pre-conciliar Church. Let me say, almost in the same breath, that I am speaking of them as members of what appeared to many to be a professional class, or even caste, and that I take full note, as I do so, of the many individual priests and religious who were glorious exceptions to what tended to be a general rule amongst them, *subconsciously* clung to, I am sure, and most certainly without a trace of malice, but a rule all the same.

The Pre-Conciliar Priest : A Man of Position

The pre-conciliar priest and/or religious tended, I would say, to regard himself too much as a man of position; to take to himself, however subconsciously, a status which removed him from significant contact with the Faithful in general and, in particular, from two groups amongst them at a time when contact was essential and the absence of which has brought tragic results. I have in mind the young and the poor. The former are now leaving the Church. The latter, as a class, never felt really wanted by it. The priest, as I see it, is not basically a man of position, neither should he ever try to be. He is a man called, for reasons best known to God, to be close to God and, therefore, to others for His sake; above all to offer Supreme Sacrifice to God. That is all and that is everything. This is what he is for. So far as concerns the rest, let him be content to be taken on his merits. These may be few from the angle of natural ability. What does it matter if they are? The Curé d'Ars ploughed all his exams and Padre Pio was anything but a great scholar. Where the priest is concerned, so long as the essentials are there—love and sacrifice—the rest can look after itself. This is the attitude required. I do not think it was particularly manifest in the past. Too often, then, priesthood meant position and position demanded respect. The gap between priest and people, was, therefore, there. What you had, as a result, was a group of not unkind, often devoted men, administering professional services to the people who were in their charge; rarely with them, inclined to take refuge from them within their mem-

bership of what had come to be a self-contained caste. I hope I am not being mean or abrasive or ungenerous. I have no intention of so being; and I have religious in mind particularly. I am one. And it has been said of us in general that we take the vow of poverty and the laity keep it. I think there is a lot of truth in that and I think the young notice it. Certainly it places a barrier between ourselves and the poor. In general I do not think that we priests and religious went out to others for Christ's sake and with the love He wanted us to give them. There was no question of our sharing our lives with them, particularly the poor whom we did not even know. The nearest we got was a cup of tea or a drink with "nice people" of the middle class.

Authority and Conformity

And where authority was concerned, it was not true and thoughtful obedience that priests and religious gave their Superiors, but conformity, basically, for the sake of security and the maintenance of position. One had to keep right with one's bishop or religious superior, which is not necessarily to be identified with loyalty to him, not as an individual, but as one whose duty it is to uphold God's Truth and whose authority is to be used for the purpose for which it was given; the good of the Church. I need hardly add that Bishops saw their relationship to Rome, where authority was concerned, in the same way that priests and religious saw themselves in relation to their Bishops and religious superiors; and that Bishops expected from the Faithful in their dioceses and priests from their parishioners the same unthinking conformism that they were accustomed to extend by way of insurance to those set in authority over themselves. The results was a conformist Church, which meant an unthinking Church. A Church where uniformity was aimed at rather than unity; where there was little, really, to stir the heart, for it is difficult to get enthusiastic over what appears as not much more than a reasonably smoothly running, impersonal machine whose demand seems to be that you should move in motion with it and nothing more. There is nothing here to appeal to the young; no room for the poor. When I came back from a trip to the States in 1947 I said, "The trouble with the Church in

America is that it is turning into nothing more than a great big business machine". I think I was right. The Church there is now reaping the whirlwind.

There are two things about the conformism, with its attendant lack of vitality, that appears to me to have marked the pre-conciliar Church. In the first place, the structuring that sprang from it and surrounded it was hardly calculated to favour a vigorous apostolate. Within that structuring there was little room for love; for that "*caritas Christi*" that should send us out to others, as it sent St. Paul, for Christ Our Lord's sake. It was all rather staid and static, with restrictions built in to maintain a machine whose smooth running appeared increasingly to be the only purpose of its existence. For example, how many young curates in those pre-conciliar days were frustrated to the point of almost total exasperation because prevented from doing what they saw needed doing for the young in their parish by reason of the presence over them of a Parish Priest whose rules and regulations were such as to make it impossible for them to do so. Those rules were made too often to suit the convenience of one who saw his duty as that of maintaining the smooth running of a machine, which had long since ceased to be an apostolic *means*, but become no more than an end in itself whose maintenance as such was a top priority. The tendency was the same in religious orders. I remember once in my young days saying with considerable bitterness, "If St. Francis Xavier had been alive today, he would not have been allowed to go to the Indies because there he would have had no bell for supper". To the Faithful, I imagine, and particularly the young, there was little that appeared human about the pre-conciliar Church, with its formulae and its rules, its apparent disinclination to encourage responsible thinking and generous sacrifice. Who, after all, would give his life for a machine? Overall was the domination of a professionally kind, at times off-hand, on the whole distant and self-contained clerical and religious caste.

The Young Mentally Turned Away

Small wonder that there was no real contact in that Church between its distant and kindly but self-contained

professionals, and the young and the poor. There was no manifest love in it, little attractiveness, little ability to understand the present trends or to develop out of the Church's rich tradition a manner and mode and peripheral structuring that would bring men to herself and herself to them. It is this — and I come to my second point — that turned the young mentally away from the Church long before Vatican II. Outwardly they still conformed because they belonged to a conforming age, but their hearts were not in the Church because their hearts were made for love and they could see little to love in it. To put it brutally, they had been brought up to give their assent to a group of formulae and set of practices, which were presented to them as the content of their religion, never shown the depth of their Faith and its total reality in terms of their daily lives. Small wonder that, when the crunch came for many of them, they went where love led them. I cannot blame them. Man does not live by formulae and relatively meaningless practices alone, but by the words that come from the mouth of God. The young rarely got those words; the poor hardly heard them. They had never been taught them, shown how to make them their very own in terms of their daily lives. Long before Pope John ever called the Second Vatican Council I was saying on Catholic platforms and in public that, so far as I could see, the worst taught subject in Catholic schools was the Catholic religion. The object in so many of them seemed to me to be to turn out good English citizens who happened to be Catholics, as distinct from good Catholics (in the finest sense of that much maligned phrase) who happened to be English citizens. Now, of course, the young are open, as they were not then, much more honest I would say, and I love them for it. Amongst them, today, there is no outward conformity where there is no inward conviction. If they cannot see the point of Church or Mass they leave the one and cease attending the other. I can understand this. I cannot blame them so much as those, schooled in conformity disguised as Faith, who were responsible for their upbringing. I have long been of this mind. I say it now publicly because I believe it to be true. The true renewal of religious instruction which should be our first priority now, does not mean giving the young no more than a set of formulae and prac-

tices. It means teaching them the truths of their religion in depth and in relation to the vital business of living that lies before them. In this way, teaching religious and others have been lamentably deficient. Now we are all reaping the whirlwind. We have got what we deserved.

Practice What You Preach

Clearly, if the young are to be taught their Faith in depth and in relation to their daily lives, those who teach must live the lives they would have the young live. Otherwise the young, quite rightly, will not believe them. It follows therefore, that we all have a task to do. This is what true renewal means — depth and richness added to our lives through prayer and sacrifice expressed in a steady love of others for Christ Our Lord's sake and that knows no limits. Once we begin striving for this the rest will follow and there will come from us to the young that which they truly want; the bread of life. What they have been given too often in the past is a stone. But they don't want a stone. Who does? So the young go away.

Social Modernism Breeds Religious Modernism

The pre-conciliar Catholic school, if I may say so, and pre-conciliar parents were too often giving the young what they thought of as religious instruction, but what was, in fact and far too often, a brand of pious conformism masquerading under its guise. What was urged on them was a series of practices to be taken up and, so far as they could see, meaningless formulae to be clung to by way of what amounted to an insurance policy against the worst that could happen when the crunch-moment of death came. For the rest, fitting into the values which the Church in practice appeared to fit into for the sake of being accepted, tolerated by an increasingly secularised world. The accent was on going along with what was, not rocking the boat in the supposed long-term interests of the Church's supernatural mission. The conforming, in consequence, of social action and practice to suit a *status quo* in surrounding society established on a basis of secular values and with little or no regard for man's supernatural destiny. This kind of social conformism practised in and by the Church for man

years before the Second Vatican Council is what Pius XI called *Social Modernism*—an acceptance of the false values and practices of surrounding secular society for the sake of social peace. This was the *Social Modernism* against which Pope Pius XI protested and which he worked so hard to check, but with so little effect, because bishops, clergy and religious by and large disregarded his injunctions in practice, as they had disregarded the social teaching of his predecessors, and went along with what *was* for the sake of a quiet life, which they identified quite wrongly with social peace. This is what they wanted and they sought it through unthinking and irresponsible conformity to the mores and manners of prevailing secular society. In this, if I may say so, they were thoroughly disobedient. And what we are seeing now, of course, is the almost inevitable consequence of the Social Modernism of so many past years. The habit of *social* conformism—bending social principle, forgetting about it in the face of social abuse—is passing over, within the Church, into the habit of *religious* conformism, which means a bending of doctrine and morals to meet the demands of a society that has passed from a secularism that tolerates *outward* conformity to a brand of neo-paganism that demands *inward* conformity as well; i.e. a bending of doctrinal and moral teaching to suit its so-called values. So, progressive theologians and moralists within the Church are hard at work today trying to achieve the final degradation that religious conformism, which is no more than neo-Modernism, demands. What confronts us, at the moment, then, has not come out of the blue. It is the inevitable consequence of that habit of *social* conformism that has long been bred in the Church, particularly during the years between the death of St. Pius X and the calling of the Second Vatican Council. Against this background of years of social conformism, the neo-modernist explosion that occurred at the Council and whose blast has rocked the Church since, was no more than inevitable.

Two Things to Do

We are still suffering from the effects of that explosion and we shall continue to do so until and unless we remember two things. The first is that conformism in the double

sense in which I have used the word—of clerics and laity to ecclesiastical authority and of the Church to the prevailing *status quo*—must go. In each case it must go and be replaced by the love of Christ Our Lord which sees loyalty to the Truth as the primary requisite demanded of us all. True obedience follows in the shape of a shared responsibility to the Truth assumed by those who command and by those who obey. Where the Church's relationship to surrounding secular society is concerned, that same loyalty to the Truth out of love for Christ Our Lord bids her reject those false values which have been rotting the West since long before the Second Vatican Council and which she has far too easily tolerated for the sake, as I have just said, of what her representatives affect to see as social peace at both national and international level. She will not get even that. The end of the present road her compliance has helped to create—through what appears to have become an inbred habit of *laissez-faire* with regard to the prevailing social order, whether it be to the Right or to the Left—will be either totalitarian slavery, which will suppress her, or a neo-corporativism, of the type fast developing in this country, which will set the individual at naught and herself as well, along with the individual. The Church must recover her values and her courage, which means that we, as members of the Church, must do the same. No longer waver but speak fearlessly against social abuse whether it comes from the Right or from the Left, cleansing ourselves thereby — and with ourselves the Church we love — from the *social* modernism which has paved the way, more than anything else, for the present deadly spread of *religious* modernism throughout our midst. Our duty is positively to oppose both, with courage and sacrifice. This is our present task. It will remain half done if either is neglected.

Present Attempts at Renewal Lead Nowhere

Let it be said in conclusion that present attempts at what is called renewal will get the Church nowhere in this regard. For what these appear to add up to is no more than a surface change in a vain attempt by those concerned to *accomodate* the Church to a changing world. This is the last thing the Church in her representatives should be doing.

ng. She should be standing firm against social abuse—showing her true radicalism—on the one hand, whilst, on the other, going with the love of Christ in the persons of her priests and layfolk to the young, the poor and the dispossessed. At the same time, she should be working with everything she has—which means that we should be working with everything we have — to deepen the life of her people in Christ through prayer and sacrifice, whilst repelling with every means known to her the attack on doctrine and morals—the attack of *religious* modernism—which is directed now at her very heart. She cannot do one successfully without the other. Neither can we. Where all of us are concerned, I think, the time has come for a relentless examination of conscience, not as an end in itself, but by way of essential prelude to the positive and prayerful action that must be taken if Christ and His Church are to be given the victory over the confusion of these dark days.

END OF THE AFFAIR

is what I said to myself after reading Father Bryan Houghton's article entitled "The Muddle of the Mass" which will be published in May and occupy about a dozen pages of that issue of *Christian Order*. I cannot honestly see that there is any answer to what he writes there with that combination of charity, urbanity and wistful humour that characterises all his articles. Those who wish to read this article and have not yet renewed their subscriptions are advised to do so *without delay*. We expect a heavy demand for this forthcoming May issue of *Christian Order*. With the best will in the world we *cannot* guarantee copies to those who are late with their renewal of subscriptions.

—The Editor.

Five Wounds of Holy Church

DR. RUDOLF GRABER, BISHOP OF REGENSBURG

3 : DWINDLING AWARENESS OF SIN

UP to now we have spoken of the dwindling of the spirit of prayer and of the spirit of reverence. Now we shall turn to the third wound, the dwindling of the awareness of sin, a topic which belongs like no other to Lent for it is precisely to this period of the Ecclesiastical Year that the words of St. Peter apply : "Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust : that he might offer us to God" ,1 Pet 3, 18).

Existence of Sin Largely Denied

Anyone who takes Lenten sermons from the past out of the cupboard and reads them again will notice that they are all constructed as follows : they proceed from the fact that sin exists, then depict man's longing for redemption from his oppressing guilt and finally proclaim the glad tidings of the new Easter life to which he has been redeemed by Christ through the remission of guilt and sin. Today things have become more difficult : we can scarcely speak of sin any longer since its existence is to a large extent denied. This is the sober fact with which we have to reckon and the sad experience of many clergy who today hear the admission : I don't really know what to confess. I haven't done anything particularly bad and if something has occurred, I can't help it, that is just the way I am made, it's simply my nature. Of course, I don't want to pretend to be a saint, but the one or two regrettable weaknesses don't really count, more or less everyone has them. This is how people talk. The awareness of sin is disappearing.

Some Examples

Let us here name just a few examples. How strictly, for instance, was the obligation to attend Sunday Mass taken in the past although even then grounds existed for being excused: was it really necessary to question this commandment in such a way that the faithful became no longer conscious of a strict obligation? How emphatically did God insist on the hallowing of the Sabbath in the Old Testament? How often has the violation of the Sabbath called forth divine judgement (e.g. Neh. 13, 15-21). But for us it is too much to give the Lord one hour's worship a week!

It may be true that some people were over-anxious in sexual matters in the past but today we have fallen into the reverse. Everything is made light of; indeed, much more: at an event somewhere the song was heard "O sin, how sweet you are" and thousands applauded.¹

Robbery and murder used to be considered crimes deserving severe punishment: today their perpetrators are sent to psychiatric clinics.

Character assassination is practically the order of the day, but who worries about that in our age of "gentlemen's failings", which are regarded now as socially acceptable? We are told not to take such things to heart. But was it not said by Pope Pius XII that "the greatest sin of our time is the loss of the concept of sin itself"?

Guilt and the Devil

At this point I must allow a philosopher to speak. In his book *On the Eternal in Man*² he states the following: "One of the blackest effects of guilt is that it conceals itself as it grows, so to say, and dulls the sense of its existence. And conversely, it is a feature of the growth of humility and holiness that the feeling of guilt becomes functionally refined as the guilt itself decreases; i.e. a saint experiences minimal omissions as sin and guilt where we perceive nothing sinful at all and where, objectively, no moral offence does in fact exist either". In contrast to this, the increase of guilt brings about a dwindling of the feeling of guilt in the way described above. If we proceed from this law of psychology, we are forced to state the following grim fact

with respect to our times : the unconcern with which people live without a thought for the future, largely no longer caring a rap about commandments and norms, is a sign of the ever-increasing flood of evil and the spread of moral corruption. Something similar is, incidentally, also to be found in current discussions on the Devil : the more one denies his existence and bids farewell to him*, the more he works his mischief. The Lord himself hinted at this when he said that the last state of a man was worse than the first since seven evil spirits return at once (Mt. 12, 45). The dwindling of a feeling of guilt is hence not a sign that everything is in order; on the contrary, it is a sign that the barometer has fallen and that the guilt has become dreadful. And as for the Devil, in whom according to certain people's opinions only the eternally backward-looking continue to "believe" Goeth's words still hold true : "Folk never feel the Devil is there, not even when he has them by the collar". Satan's incognito is proof of his massive presence and activity in our time. Some years ago a book entitled *The Devil's Epoch*³ produced a wave of indignation, but is not Pope Paul VI saying the same thing when he expresses the opinion that "through some crack or other the smoke of Satan has penetrated the Temple of God"⁴ or when he speaks of the "hour of darkness and thunderbolts"⁵

Conscience and Change

But how has the Devil managed to conjure himself and sin out of the world ? This was in its way nothing short of a stroke of genius. To achieve it he made use of what is God's voice in man and even a warning indication of God's existence, namely man's conscience. He whispered to man that "conscience is the supreme and ultimately binding subjective norm for your actions"⁶. This appeal to conscience is to be found everywhere today : how often do we hear people say, before my conscience that is not a sin. Admittedly, the Second Vatican Council also speaks of the "dignity of the moral conscience"⁷ but as "the highest norm of human life" it names "divine law itself, the eternal, objective and universal law through which God, according to

*An allusion to Herbert Haag's *Abschied vom Teufel* (Farewell to the Devil) Einsiedeln 1969, which in dismissing the Devil as unnecessary today sparked off the Controversy in Germany (translator's note).

the decree of his wisdom and love, orders, directs and rules the whole world and the ways of the community of man"⁸ It thus provides eternal, objective and universal norms which I have to take as an orientation and to which I must adhere. These norms and laws are falling into oblivion today, or rather, they are simply ignored. Hence we are witnessing a return of those times which proclaim man to be the "measure of all things". Man decides on the basis of his conscience what is good or bad for him and it is not surprising that his decision turns out in favour of the non-sinful. Eternal, immutable norms and laws exist here and there no more than eternally valid truths, for everything is subject to historical change. This idea of "historicity" represents a second factor alongside his conscience to which present-day man appeals: historical change means that what was previously regarded as sin is today no longer viewed as such. How often are the words to be heard today : Yes, it used to be so but today it is different; since the Council everything has changed. If that were the case, if Ovid's "omnia mutantur" (all things change) holds true, then that anarchy would rule of which a poet in his turn says, "For all that comes into being deserves to perish". If nothing immutable, stable and permanent exists, then everything is nonsense and man is the most pitiable creature on earth. In the last analysis, however, all this is directed against God himself. An eternal God, who is Love, would question his own being if nothing stable and immutable existed and everything were subject to permanent change, if truth and falsehood were interchangeable and evil could likewise be good, as the case may be. God, who has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight (Wisd. 11, 21), has set up the pillars of order in the moral sphere, too. The sinner disrupts this order towards himself and also towards other people and all created things, as is stated by the Second Vatican Council : "Thus man is torn within himself. Hence the whole of man's life, both individual and collective, presents itself as a struggle—what is more, as a dramatic struggle—between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds himself incapable of resisting the assaults of evil on his own strength so that each individual feels himself to be as if enchained. The Lord himself, however, came in order to liberate and

strengthen man by renewing him inwardly and casting out the prince of this world (Jn. 12, 31), who held him enslaved in sin. Sin, however, debases man himself and repels him from achieving fulness⁹⁹.

This is something we ought to reflect upon precisely in Lent. The admission and repentance of our sins prepares us by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus to begin a new life in him.

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ATHANASIUS

On the day, my Lord
When you stand before God,
You, and you alone will answer
For those committed
To your care.
Now there is no appeal
To majority decisions,
Or national Episcopal Councils.
You stand or fall alone.

Fr. Joseph Brown

We are all subjected these days to a constant barrage of advertising. Some of it is misleading. It may stimulate the level of demand in the economy to the point where inflation occurs, or it may contribute to the demands for inflationary wage increases. It may also distort our scale of values in certain directions.

Some Aspects of Advertising

J. M. JACKSON

ADVERTISING is clearly a major activity in contemporary society. It is hardly possible to pass a single day without exposure to some form of advertising. Newspapers and periodicals contain numerous advertisements, large and small; there are posters in the streets advertising various products; sports arenas are covered in such posters; and, of course, there are the television commercials. Advertising should be an informative process. In so far as it is genuinely informative, it serves a useful purpose. It is, for example, very desirable that consumers should be informed where they can find the goods or services they wish to purchase, or that an unemployed worker should know which firms have vacancies, or an able worker learn of opportunities to find employment at a higher level. Advertising that achieves ends such as these may be regarded as beneficial. But can we be sure that all advertising is directed towards such desirable ends?

There must be little doubt that in practice advertising is not always beneficial. The following aspects of advertising must be looked at. First, advertising may be intended to persuade rather than inform. Secondly, advertising may involve a waste of resources. Thirdly, advertising may provide misinformation. Fourthly, advertising may promote the consumption of undesirable products. Finally, adver-

tisements may be of a kind that are undesirable in themselves.

Persuasive Advertising

It is apparent that much advertising is directed towards persuading people to buy a particular product. Most people, for example, do not need to be persuaded to buy soap. The number of baths they take is unlikely to be affected by television advertising. What the advertiser hopes to do is to persuade the customer that a particular brand of soap is infinitely superior to any other. The buyer, it is hoped, will remain faithful to that particular brand, giving the manufacturer an assured level of sales at the price he has fixed. Persuasive advertising may not just be aimed at creating loyalty to a particular brand. It may also aim at creating a demand for a modified product, or even some entirely new product. Needless to say the modified product is one that will usually sell at a substantially higher price. It is possible to get clean under a shower with an ordinary tablet of soap, but the manufacturers try to persuade us that we need their special gel in a plastic bottle at perhaps ten times the price.

The modified product may give a bigger profit margin, or it may be introduced as part of the battle against a rival. Competing companies may be fighting to increase their market shares. Advertising may try to secure the loyalty of consumers to a particular brand, or even to detach some consumers from their loyalty to another brand, but if there is an advertising campaign for a new product, with its novelty appeal, there is a much better chance of capturing some of the market that previously went to a rival. Of course, the rival too will be looking for a new type of product for the same reason.

Wasteful Advertising

Where advertising is primarily persuasive it is likely also to be wasteful. Scarce resources are being used not to produce commodities but merely to persuade people to buy them. Men, machines and raw materials have to be used to produce any commodity. Similar resources are used to advertise them. If fewer resources were used in advertising

more would be available to increase the output of commodities that contribute directly to raising our standard of living. Whilst any persuasive advertising may be regarded as wasteful to some extent, there is a very obvious and gross waste involved in much competitive advertising. Two big firms dominate the market for soap and detergents. If they did not bother to advertise, sales might be shared in a certain proportion between them. One firm starts to advertise in the hope of increasing its share of the market. For fear of losing its share, the other does the same. The result is that perhaps the market shares remain unchanged, or at the most only slightly changed. But considerable resources are now being devoted to advertising. This is sheer waste.

There is another consequence of advertising which may be considered along with the question of waste. This is the way in which advertising may stimulate the overall level of demand in the economy. No amount of advertising is likely to make much difference to the demand for certain products. We are, for example, unlikely to be much influenced in our total demand for soap detergents by the advertisements that we see. Here advertising is mainly concerned with loyalty to the particular brand. But in the case of other products we may be persuaded to buy more. We may be induced to have a bottle of wine with a meal more often; we may be persuaded to replace some durable good before it is worn out because we feel we must have the latest model with all the new gimmicks; and so on.

This might not be too serious in an economy where output can be increased without difficulties. In conditions of economic difficulty this stimulation of the overall level of demand may be inflationary. This can work in two ways. First, it means that people may spend rather than save. If this is so, the demand for goods is high and if scarcities develop prices may be forced up. There is also the danger that if demand is excessive in relation to home supply, imports will be sucked into the country to close the gap and thus create a balance of payments problem. More recently, the inflationary pressure has come from rising costs. The big rise in the price of oil was naturally reflected in higher prices, but before that happened prices were also forced up by the way in which wages were rising more rapidly than productivity. But why were wages rising more

rapidly? The answer is very simple, workers had come to expect annual increases in wages that went beyond anything justified by rising productivity. There remains the more fundamental question; why were workers expecting such annual increases? Advertising may not be the whole of the answer but it may well have contributed. Advertising aimed at persuading people they must have these products. If they could not afford them, then there was a natural tendency to demand higher pay so that they could.

Misinformation

It is desirable that the consumer should be well informed about the nature of the product he is buying, the price he will have to pay for it, where he can buy, and so on. On the other hand it is clearly undesirable that he should be misinformed, whether accidentally or intentionally. There are many ways in which advertising may be misleading. False claims may be made for a product. Breakfast cereals may be promoted as nutritious products whereas significant food values lie not in the cereal itself but in the milk and sugar which may be used with it.

There is no need to elaborate on this kind of case. Any advertisement which makes false claims for the product is undesirable, whatever the nature of the product or the claims made for it. It is important to realise that advertising can be misleading without any false statement actually being made. There is currently a dispute taking place about the claims being made for gas central heating. This is not an easy case to determine in practice. Nevertheless, the kind of problem that is involved illustrates the way in which perfectly accurate information can be misleading. It is, of course, a matter of telling the truth, but not necessarily the whole truth. Some imaginary figures will show how telling part of the truth can be positively misleading. It may be claimed that a house can be adequately heated by gas for £100 a year whereas electricity will cost £200 a year. This information would seem to suggest that gas would be much cheaper than electricity. All that the information really tells us is that the annual cost of gas heating is less than the cost of heating by electricity. The cost of both forms, however, includes the initial cost of the heating system. Suppose that

electricity involves an initial outlay of £100, and that the householder is thinking in terms of total costs over a period of five years. His total costs for electrical heating will therefore be £1,100. Running costs for gas will be £500, so provided the capital cost of the system is less than £600, gas will be the cheaper system. But if the cost is more than £600 for the installation of the system, the advantage will lie with electricity. (If allowance is made for interest charges if the capital cost is not paid in full at the start, or for the possibility that one can earn interest on the difference in initial costs between the two systems if one has the money available, the critical value of the initial cost of the gas system will be reduced. If interest is assumed to be ten per cent, it would be preferable to choose electricity if gas cost more than £527 to install. At a higher rate of interest, which would be a more realistic assumption, the maximum that could be paid for a gas installation to leave it cheaper overall would fall still further).

An advertising practice which has attracted the attention of the Director General of Fair Trading is that of traders advertising in a manner which suggests they are private individuals wishing to sell. There are a number of disadvantages in this from the buyer's point of view. He may not want to deal with a trader. This may seem illogical but the individual is free to deal with whom he pleases. He should not be put to trouble and expense in responding to advertisements that suggest he is dealing with a private individual when he is not. The price he has to pay may be affected. There can be little sympathy for the individual who is simply looking for a bargain at the expense of a private seller. On the other hand, the buyer might expect to get a slightly cheaper product without being unfair to the seller. If a dealer buys a second hand car, he will plan to sell it at more than he pays the original owner. He is entitled to make a profit in this way. But if a private sale is made somewhere between the price at which a dealer buys and that at which he sells, both the buyer and the seller will have benefitted.

The more serious aspect of this practice, however, is the way in which the buyer is deceived as to the nature of his legal rights. Legislation has increasingly given the purchaser

certain rights. He is entitled to receive goods of 'merchantable quality'; that is, good which are fit for the purpose for which they are intended. He can, if the goods are unsatisfactory, insist upon their replacement or a refund and he may claim damages in addition for consequential losses arising from the faulty goods. A dealer can be prosecuted for making misleading statements (under the Trade Description Act), and if the prosecution succeeds the court may also award compensation to the buyer. The same protection does not extend to purchases from private individuals. If a dealer conceals the fact that he is such, he is in effect denying the purchaser the rights which the law says he should have. If it comes to light that the seller is in fact a dealer, then these rights are unaffected. The trouble is the buyer may not find out that he is in fact buying from a dealer. It is to be hoped therefore that the proposals by the Director General of Fair Trading to ban this type of misleading advertisement will be quickly implemented.

Harmful Products

If products are themselves harmful, it follows that advertising to increase their sales is also damaging. There have already been steps taken to limit the advertising of cigarettes, and the packets themselves carry a health warning. If all forms of advertising of cigarettes (and perhaps other tobacco products) were to be banned completely it would hardly affect the attitude of those already addicted to smoking. Given the extent of the practice, it would not prevent some people from taking up smoking. If, however, it did something to reduce the number of people in the next generation of smokers it would be a clear gain to society.

There may also be a case for some measure of control over advertising, even where the product is not harmful when used in moderation. Smoking is likely to have some harmful consequences for most people, and certainly carries serious risks for all. Alcohol can be harmful for some, but there is no reason to suppose that used in moderation it is in any way harmful to the great majority of people in the country. What we must ask is whether it is desirable to

ave this particular product heavily advertised. There must be some danger that the constant plugging of alcohol in advertisements will encourage drinking to excess.

Harmful Advertising

So far attention has been focussed on the objectives of advertising. We have seen how advertising tries to increase the sales of particular products or to attach the consumer more firmly to specific brands of these products. It is obviously undesirable that the consumer should be misled by false claims in advertisements. We have seen too the danger that the overall level of demand in the economy will be boosted and that this will contribute to inflationary pressures. Finally, however, we must consider the possibility that harm will be done to the consumer in other ways, not in the sense that he will incur some loss as a result of being deceived or incur some hardship as the result of the country's economic difficulties but that he may be harmed in some more personal sense.

It would be a mistake to suggest that there is necessarily something wrong with rising standards of material well-being. The individual is fully entitled to enjoy a rising standard of living if he can improve his abilities and take on more skilled and responsible work. Similarly there is no reason why the community as a whole should not enjoy rising living standards as technology improves. This does not deny the possibility that we may have tried, both as individuals and as a community, to secure too rapid a rate of advancement. The individual may seek his advancement with too little concern for how he gets ahead; he may be ruthless towards those who stand in his way or he may devote all his efforts to securing his advancement to the neglect of his family responsibilities. The community as a whole may be guilty of pursuing the goal of an immediate increase in the output of goods and services at the cost of environmental pollution and the excessive depletion of finite resources.

What we must ask is whether there may be some connection between these attitudes and the current level of advertising. Conclusive evidence might be difficult to find, but we must surely recognise the possibility that if people are

subject to constant attempts to persuade them that they 'need' certain products, then it is only logical that if they believe this they should go all out to make the satisfaction of these needs possible. Far more serious than any harmful economic effects would be this fostering of an unduly materialistic attitude in people.

Similarly, one may be unhappy about the extent to which an element of sex is introduced into so many advertisements. This is not just an objection to the nudity which features in some advertisements. This may be relatively harmless, at least when reasonably in context. If somebody is trying to sell a shower cabinet it may be quite natural to portray someone using it. There can be little or no real objection to depicting nudity where this would be perfectly normal for the ordinary person. But why, for example, should the Motor Show try to enhance the appearance of its products by draping them with nude girls? Or why should many advertisements try to make the point (generally quite misleadingly) that its use will make the user more attractive to the opposite sex? As with materialism, the objection is not to the content of any one advertisement. The trouble is that there is a degree of emphasis on sex which is out of place. Nobody would want to deny that sex does have an important part in human life, but it is a part that should not be exaggerated, nor should it be debased in the pursuit of profit. (Of course, it might be open to the advertiser to claim that he is merely responding to the world as he finds it rather than creating the mistaken attitudes of the age. But even if such mistaken attitudes did not have their origins in the present type of advertising—and it is unlikely in fact that they did—it does not really alter the situation. Advertising may well be reinforcing mistaken values, even if not to blame for their actual existence.)

Any Questions

WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.

How can I meet the charge that my traditionalism is divisive? It seems to be true.

It is true. So what? What's wrong with being divisive? Divisiveness is neither good nor bad in itself. The word, like "conform", is neutral. St. Paul says: "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 6:2); but he tells us to be "made conformable to the death" of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

The one divine member of our human race, the divine Person involved with us in the history of mankind, is the most divisive figure of all. "Do not think I came to send peace upon earth: I came to send not peace but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother . . . And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household" (M. 10:34-36). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). "The Son of man shall come in his majesty and all nations shall be gathered together before him: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (M. 25:31-32). Our Lord's most divisive words are: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire" (M. 25:41).

It is divisive to stick to truth and goodness, to live by Christian principles, to belong to the Catholic Church. If we do not choose the right divisiveness we shall turn into formless flabby lumps and shall disappear eventually in a conformism with falsehood.

I do not know what you understand by "traditionalism". The label is stuck on a great variety of behaviours, some of which are divisive in the sense of schismatic. Do make sure that your traditionalism is fully and firmly within the Catholic Church.

A priest has just told me that "Mass" is a meaningless word. Would he dare say that to the martyrs who died for the Mass and to all the "Massing-priests" who kept the Faith for us ?

He won't be meeting martyrs and Massing-priests just yet, and he has time to change his mind. There is this much good in his remark, that he warns you that the attack on the Mass has got to the point of trying to get rid of its name. The fashion in France at present is to use the word "célébration" instead; and some of our fashion-conscious brethren here would rather say "liturgical celebration" than Mass.

Originally, "Ite, missa (or missio) est" was a formula of dismissal at the end, for example, of a lawcourt case. It was used in that way at the end of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. But very soon the word meant the Holy Sacrifice itself. St. Ambrose (c. 400 A.D.) talks of "missam facere", to perform the Mass; so the word has had a rich meaning for fifteen hundred years—that is why the Protestants dropped it.

A similar trickery is being used with the word "transubstantiation". An article on "intercommunion" that I have just read says that what happens in the Holy Eucharist should be expressed for modern man in a modern idiom and even an episcopal office can inform correspondents that "the meaning of the word has now been changed". There's a quick change for you! In 1965 the present Holy Father said that to what takes place in the Mass "the Catholic Church gives the suitable and accurate name of transubstantiation" (Encyclical "Mysterium Fidei"). That statement was repeated in the "Credo of the People of God" in 1971.

Modernists harping on the need for a modern idiom should be corrected by recalling Paul VI's words: "it is intolerable that anyone on his own initiative should want to modify the formulas with which the Council of Trent has proposed the eucharistic mystery for belief".

Book Review

PLUS CA CHANGE

Communism and Christianity in Theory and Practice; published by Aid to the Church in Need, 3-5 North Street, Chichester, West Sussex; £1 or \$2.00 (post free); pp. 137.

The idea of "dialogue" between Christianity and Communism is one which has become very familiar to all of us in recent years. Now, Father Werenfried van Straaten's organisation, Aid to the Church in Need, which helps the Church in the poorest parts of the world and behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and Russia, has published a detailed and well-researched book designed to be a contribution to the general discussion about the possibility of Christians and Communists working together in the world.

Aid to the Church in Need is well qualified to sponsor such a document. For over a quarter of a century Father Werenfried and his helpers have been giving support to those most in need of it all over the globe: in the slums of South America, in the impoverished rural areas of Asia and Africa, in the prison-camps of the USSR, in the stark new housing developments in Eastern Europe.

The book begins with an analysis of Communist theory, designed to answer the question "Is present-day Communism loyal to Marxism-Leninism?" and consisting of quotations from various leading Communist thinkers, activists, and writers. This makes fascinating reading in the light of current claims that Communism is no longer totally opposed to religion. For instance, most people know that, at the beginning of this century, Lenin was saying things like: "Marxism must be materialistic, that is to say the enemy of religion, but it is a dialectic materialism; that means it places the struggle against religion not in an abstract manner on a theoretical and verbal field but concretely on the plane of the class struggle". Again, "Religion and Communism are incompatible in theory as well as in practice", but it is not often that we are reminded that in 1964 Ilyitchev (responsible for the ideology of the Com-

munist Party of the Soviet Union) was saying "Marxist atheism does not confine itself to the simple refutation of religion and its teaching, it suppresses it". Further, in 1970, Georges Marchais (Secretary-General of the French Communist Party) stated categorically: "We, the Communists, we claim a materialistic and dialectic philosophy. We do not wish to create illusions on this point: between Marxism and Christianity no theoretical conciliation is possible, no ideological convergence is possible".

After the theory comes the practice, and again the book makes clear by extensive quotes the fact that, from the very beginning, Communist regimes have used subtle techniques to destroy religion—indeed, as Stalin put it in 1926, "Based on a given stage of the Revolution, the tactics may vary on several occasions according to flux or reflux, according to the advance or decline of the Revolution". It is made clear that, right up to and including the present time, the Communists aim is to create a wholly new world order and, while religion might be permitted to exist, this is only to serve the greater interests of Communism. Therefore, in the final reckoning: "Whilst permitting the Church to carry out its action, we shall never renounce our principles. Even though in my capacity of Minister of State I am obliged to smile in order to inspire confidence, as a Communist I will fight religion and the Church without respite, from an ideological as well as a philosophical point of view" (Kakol Director of the Office of Worship in Poland, 1976).

Following this detailed exploration into Communism the book examines the teaching of the Popes, and again it is interesting to read things that have been said about Communism by the Popes over the last fifty years. Of course the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* is well known and is indeed quoted at length, but how many of us know what Pope Paul has said on the matter? And Pope John XXIII? It is very interesting to see how Pope John spoke of "the sorrowful Calvary of the Church of Silence" and of the folly of trying to create a just and peaceful social order without acknowledgment of God. And one of the most interesting quotations from Pope Paul is: "To talk of 'Christians for Socialism' is a contradiction in terms. This deforms matters. Christianity is in itself sufficient and is social in nature. It may have certain similarities with Socialism for various

purposes which are laudible. But the formula of 'Christians for Socialism' cannot be accepted as if it were a great discovery and a novelty".

The book goes on to explore the situation in countries when Communism is not in power—the sections on France are especially interesting, as the speeches of both sides in the various Christian/Communist dialogues are reported—and when Communism shares power, where the most exciting section is on Portugal. Here, in full, is the magnificent statement of the late Mgr. Da Silva, Archbishop of Braga and Primate of Portugal, presenting his manifesto on behalf of the people of Portugal. *Christian Order* rightly heralded this at the time as a turning-point in Portugal's history, when a strong voice spoke out in the vacuum that had been left following the revolution and when all the world assumed that Communism would fill it. Mgr. Da Silva's splendid words, spelling out the rights of ordinary people and the duties of the nation's government are warmly inspiring. And they are followed by a lengthy quotation from a letter sent by two Christians from the USSR to the people of Portugal and including the dramatic plea: "Christians of Portugal! We beseech you: in defining your conduct in your present political and social building up of the new Portugal, do not forget the tragic instructive experience of our own country".

The final section of the book is an examination of the countries in which Communism is in power. Here are recounted the details of systematic persecution, of people beaten and imprisoned for religious practices, of children removed from their parents because of their parents religious beliefs, of churches closed and atheistic propaganda poured out ceaselessly through the State-controlled mass media. The reports go into considerable detail, so that the reader can compare the situation in, say, Albania (where a priest was shot in 1973 for baptising a child) to Hungary and Poland. There is a fascinating section on Asia, including reports from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

The message of this book is that there is a huge gap between Christianity and Communism, because the two ideologies offer completely different visions of the world. Its reports of persecuted Christians should stir the conscience of all of us who live in freedom, while its message

—detailed, factual, and with no hint of unnecessary bluster or warmongering—should do much to clear the minds of those who have been wondering just where the Post-Vatican II Church does stand on the issue of Communism. Perhaps it is more needed on the continent of Europe than it is here in Britain—in fact it was originally produced by the French office of Aid to the Church in Need for French Catholics who were confused and worried by the endless discussions about dialogue with Communism. But we in Britain, who have no immediate prospect of a Communist party coming openly to power, would be naive not to understand its message. Communists are not always so obliging as to be as clear and self-evident in their views and actions as Lenin and Stalin. Alert Catholics must understand the dangers of the new era. How useful it is to have a handbook which equips us for the task!

Joanna Nash.

CRUCIFIXION

On your hands O Christ
bright jewels of blood,
on your brow the pain sweat.
Pierced and patient
are your despairing feet.
In your suffering you sag
on this dead tree,
fashioned of fear and hate
so that your rising up on the third day
will be the more miraculous and great.
I share this bloody death, am aware
at the same time of your beauty,
even in broken flesh,
am lit with pity,
and am inadequate.

Pam Croome